

Message Text

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ACTION EA-02

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PA-01 INR-01 /005 W

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R 100545Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON

TO USINFO WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

USMISSION GENEVA

SECSTATE WASHDC 7194

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

DEA WASHDC

UNCLAS RANGOON 2111

USIAC

FOR: IOR/MEDIA REACTION; IBS/PFV VOA

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJ: MEDIA REACTION: NARCOTICS

1. LOCAL PRESS GAVE PROMINENT PLAY SEPT 8 TO NEWS OF SEIZURE OF SOME 26,000 PACKETS OF FOREIGN MADE CIGARETTES (THAI AND LAO) WHICH ARE REPORTED TO CONTAIN MARIJUANA. THE STORY WAS CARRIED UNDER HEAD "SMUGGLED-IN CIGARETTES HARMFUL TO BRAIN" AND STATES A GOVERNMENT ANALYSIS REVEALED THAT THE CIGARETTES "CONTAINED GANJA AND WERE LIABLE TO DAMAGE THE BRAIN IN ADDITION TO CAUSING AN ADDICTION WHICH COULD LEAD TO THE TAKING OF HEROIN".

2. FOLLOWING EXCERPTS FROM ARTICLE "FOREIGN CIGARETTES WHICH CONTAIN HASHISH" BY U THEIN (ZAWANA) WHICH APPEARED IN THE SEPT 5 ISSUE OF THE BURMESE LANGUAGE MIRROR NEWSPAPER. BEGIN EXCERPTS.

"...THESE 'HASHISH' CIGARETTES DO NOT COME FROM A DISTANT FOREIGN LAND BUT FROM OUR NEIGHBOUR LAOS, WHICH PRODUCES THE LARGEST AMOUNT OF HASHISH IN THE WHOLE OF ASIA. THERE IS NO EFFECTIVE PROHIBITION AGAINST THE SALE OF HASHISH IN LAOS AND IT IS OPENLY SOLD IN THE SHOPS IN VIENTIANE. THIS FREE AND OPEN SALE OF HASHISH IS POSSIBLE BECAUSE PEOPLE OF HIGH AUTHORITY ARE

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INVOLVED IN THE NARCOTIC TRAFFIC.

3. "ORIGINALLY, THE HASHISH BUSINESS WAS CONDUCTED ONLY ON A SMALL SCALE IN LAOS, BUT AFTER THE ARRIVAL OF AMERICAN TROOPS, SALES INCREASED AND THE BUSINESS EXPANDED AND WAS OPERATED ON A LARGE SCALE. AT FIRST, HASHISH AND OPIUM WERE SOLD IN THE RAW STATE, BUT LATER ON MODERN METHODS WERE USED TO INCREASE THE SALE OF THESE NARCOTICS BY PUTTING HASHISH INTO CIGARETTES AND BY PROCESSING OPIUM TO OBTAIN HEROIN.

4. "ON ACCOUNT OF THIS SITUATION, THE ASIATICS BECAME HASHISH AND HEROIN CONSUMERS AFTER THE WITHDRAWAL OF AMERICAN TROOPS FROM THE AREA..." END EXCERPTS.

5. ENGLISH LANGUAGE GUARDIAN SEPT 9 EDITORIAL TITLED, "DISASTROUS PUFFS" DISCUSSES NEED FOR INTERNATIONAL 'JOINT AND COORDINATED ACTION'. BEGIN TEXT:

6. "THE JUVENILE AND ADOLESCENT DRUG ABUSE SITUATION HERE HAS NOT REACHED EPIDEMIC PROPORTIONS BUT THE CHANCE THAT IT MIGHT BE THAT SERIOUS ONE DAY LOOMS LARGE IF WE ARE NOT ABLE TO TAKE TIMELY ACTION TO CURTAIL IT. RECENT REVELATIONS IN THE LOCAL PRESS POINT TO THE INCREASE IN DRUG ABUSE AND ADDICTION. ON THE ONE HAND THE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES HAVE BEEN WORKING IN CO-ORDINATION WITH ALLIED DEPARTMENTS HERE AND ABROAD TO ACHIEVE POSITIVE RESULTS IN THEIR EFFORTS AGAINST DRUGS. ON GLOBAL SCALE, NEW STRATEGY IN THE BATTLE AGAINST DRUG ABUSE AND ITS TRAFFICKING IS BEING CONTINUALLY FORMULATED AND IMPLEMENTED. ON THE OTHER HAND, THOSE WHO PROFIT THROUGH DRUG PEDDLING -- FROM THE INDIVIDUAL PUSHER TO THOSE WHO MANAGE TO BUILD NARCOTICS EMPIRES IN CONNIVANCE WITH THE UNDER-WORLD -- ARE COMING UP WITH NEW WAYS OF AVOIDING ENTANGLEMENT WITH THE LAW. THUS, THERE IS A CONSTANT TUG-OF-WAR. UNRELENTING EFFORTS ON THE PART OF GOVERNMENTS, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES, POOLING RESOURCES ARE PUTTING UP A BIG FIGHT. WITH ALL THAT, DRUG ABUSE IS STILL A MAJOR HEADACHE FOR GOVERNMENT THROUGHOUT THE WORLD AND A CHALLENGE ONLY JOINT AND CO-ORDINATED ACTION CAN EFFECTIVELY MEET.

7. "THE RECENT SEIZURES OF PROCESSED AND UNPROCESSED OPIUM IN THIS REGION AND THAT OF STOCKS OF FOREIGN-MADE CIGARETTES WHICH UNCLASSIFIED

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HAVE BEEN SMUGGLED INTO THE COUNTRY PROVIDE AMPLE REASON FOR ALARM. THE FAIRLY LARGE STOCK OF SEIZURES MADE ALL OVER THE COUNTRY COMPRISING DIFFERENT BRANDS PURPORTEDLY MANUFACTURED IN NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN FOUND TO BE MORE DANGEROUS THAN THEY MIGHT HAVE BEEN THOUGHT TO BE, SAMPLES SENT TO THE CHEMICAL, FOOD AND DRUG DIVISION OF THE NATIONAL HEALTH LABORATORY FOR CHEMICAL EXAMINATION HAVE BEEN PRONOUNCED TO CONTAIN GANJA WIDELY KNOWN AS A DANGEROUS DRUG WHICH CAN CAUSE BRAIN DAMAGE...

THE CENTRAL SECURITY AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE'S CRIMES COMMITTEE MADE THE REVELATION OF THE DISASTROUS PUFFS AND THE PUBLIC HAS BEEN ASKED TO COOPERATE IN HELPING TO IMPOUND SUCH CONTRABAND.

8. "FROM THE PUBLIC HEALTH ANGLE, TOBACCO ITSELF IS BAD ENOUGH, WHEN IT IS SAID TO BE SPIKED WITH HARMFUL DRUGS, IT IS RENDERED MORE LETHAL SHOULD ITS USE LEAD TO ADDICTION. POSSIBLY, THE MANUFACTURERS, WHEREVER THEY ARE SETTING UP SHOP, ARE TRYING TO POPULARIZE THEIR PRODUCTS BY TRYING TO RESORT TO SUCH TACTICS, POSSIBLY, THAKBRANDS ARE MEANT TO BE WHAT THEY ARE -- HIGHLY HARMFUL DRUGS IN CIGARETTE FORM. IT IS UP TO THE AUTHORITIES HERE TO TAKE THE MATTER UP WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF THE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN IF THAT CAN BE ASCERTAINED TO STEM THE MANUFACTURE AND INFLUX OF THE PRODUCT ABROAD. AT THE SAME TIME, IT WOULD ALSO BE PRUDENT TO TAKE RANDOM SAMPLES OF THE LOCAL CHERROOTS TO SEE IF THE CONTENTS ARE REALLY WHAT THEY HAVE BEEN SAID TO BE OR IF ANY OF THE PRIVATE ENTREPRENEURS HAVE INCLUDED SOME INGREDIENTS WHICH CAN CAUSE ADDICTION. WITH DUE RESPECT AND APOLOGY TO THOSE IN THE TRADE WHO HAVE MADE AN HONEST LIVING FOR GENERATIONS, NO ROOM FOR DOUBT SHOULD BE ALLOWED. THOSE WHO ARE HONEST AND HAVE NO ULTERIOR MOTIVES SHOULD HAVE NO FEAR IN HAVING THEIR PRODUCTS PUT THROUGH CHEMICAL ANALYSIS OR WHATEVER OTHER SCRUTINY THEY MIGHT DESERVE." END TEXT.

9. SEPT 10 GUARDIAN EDITORIAL TITLED, "MASS MEDIA AND DRUG QUESTION" DISCUSSES PROS AND CONS OF THE USE OF THE MASS MEDIA FOR PREVENTION OF DRUG ABUSE ("ANTI-DRUG ABUSE LITERATURE CAN ACTUALLY

INCREASE DRUG CONSUMPTION BY ROUSING CURIOSITY AND EXPERIMENTATION") AND CONCLUDES THAT "THE MEASURES TAKEN IN OTHER COUNTRIES FOR THIS PURPOSE SHOULD BE USEFUL IN OUR ATTEMPT AT BRINGING OUT THE FULL POSITIVE POTENTIAL OF THE MASS MEDIA IN CAMPAIGNS AGAINST
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DRUG ABUSE. THE PUBLIC SHOULD AT ALL TIMES BE MADE AWARE OF THE PROBLEM AND GIVEN THE REAL FACTS TO CONVINCE THEM OF THE DANGERS OF DRUGS FOR EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION IN COMBATTING DRUG ABUSE SO THAT SOCIETY MAY BE FREE OF SICK PEOPLE, AND ABLE TO FREE THOSE ALREADY AFFECTED." END EXCERPTS.
HANSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 SEP 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973RANGOO02111
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: RANGOON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730945/aaaabhaf.tel
Line Count: 160
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: kelleyw0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 SEP 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <28-Sep-2001 by maustmc>; APPROVED <04-Feb-2002 by kelleyw0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MEDIA REACTION: NARCOTICS
TAGS: SNAR, BM
To: n/a
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005